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Subject: Our Father, the King: Brotherhood, the Kingdom.

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A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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OUR FATHER, THE KING:

BROTHERHOOD, THE KINGDOM.

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."—MATT. vi., 9, 10.

Day and night, the tides are rising along our shores, filling bay and estuary, silently for the most part, yet surely. The power that draws them resides afar off in the heavenly bodies, and is not seen nor noticed, but only inferred. All the goodness of men, their generous impulses, their loves and faiths and inspirations of purity, their zeal and enthusiasm in self-denial and devotion—that great human tide of goodness which is moving in upon the human heart—is derived from God, who, afar off, silent as the moon in summer nights, is drawing all men unto him. The rising of the waters toward the planets is by force: the rising of human affections is by influence. Matter has no conscious part in its own motion. But though God efficiently quickens men, they work together with him responding to his influence, and are drawn toward Him.

In God's creation we find a steady progress from force toward voluntary life, from power toward persuasion, from coërcion toward liberty. The lines of development in the human race are running steadily in these directions. Men therefore worship the worshipful; they love the lovely; they admire the glorious; and they submit to the consciously superior virtue.

Two things are required for the production of any result in a moral agent—a sentient faculty, and truths which have in their nature a relation to that faculty, and tend to produce its peculiar and distinctive operation. Two things are needed in a viol: the string whose vibrations contain the musical impulse, and the hand that sets it in motion. The string can not move itself Neither could the hand produce music if it were not for the string.

SUNDAY MORNING, April 7, 1872. Lesson: Matt. V., 1-17. Hymns, (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 212, 705, 505.

Human faculty is like the string, and divine influence is the hand or power.

It would be folly to condemn animals for the lack of moral quality, because they have no moral faculty. It is wise to condemn men for the want of moral quality, because they have in them that which was created for that very purpose. In dealing with men it is in vain to expect an answer to any appeal unless something is presented whose end it is to draw out such answer. It is in vain to demand that the eye shall see, if there is no light given it to see by; or that the ear shall hear, if there be no sound conveyed to the ear; or that the hand shall feel, if there be nothing that touches it.

The moral nature requires, also, its correspondency. And as it is in the body, still more so is it in mind and in morals. How shall we smite if there be nothing wherewith to smite? How shall we enjoy if there be nothing enjoyable? How shall one laugh unless there be mirth-provoking truth to excite laughter? How shall one smile if there be nothing to please? How shall one weep if there be no sorrow-breeding presentations? How shall one admire without something admirable? How shall one love where there is no loveliness, or approve where there is no fitness, or revere where there is no superiority, or worship without any view of worshipful things?

On this principle it is that the Bible from beginning to end is constructed. It assumes and makes its appeals to man's intelligence. It assumes that man is morally susceptible. It appeals to his moral susceptibilities, according to their kind and laws. It assumes moral truth to be admirable, and then demands a response to it because it is admirable, judged according to the law of faculty by which admirableness is judged in man. It presents the divine nature as containing in itself the qualities which, according to the laws of the mind, should produce every experience commanded and expected of men. Wrapped up in the divine nature, and disclosed by revelation and experience, are all the causes which tend to produce the states of mind which are made duties among men.

When we pray for the extension of Christ's kingdom, it must be from a recognition of the beauty and desirableness of that kingdom. I cannot pray for it merely because I am commanded to do it. I am commanded to do it because I have been endowed with a sense of its desirableness. I cannot admire beauty simply because I am told to admire it. Can a blind man admire a picture which he cannot see, or a man asleep rejoice in pleasures which he cannot feel, upon mere command? We must have such a sense of God's goodness as to long that his will shall be done. We must desire to have his kingdom universal because he is Father, not according to

the pinched and penurious interpretation which we give to that glorious word, but because he is a Father transcending any earthly experience as much as the infinite does the finite. When the command comes to us to worship God, to obey him, to pray to him, and to ask for the extension of his kingdom, there must be such a presentation of God to our minds as shall wake in us a response from those moral faculties which God gave to us. If men shall make such presentations of the Divine Being and divine government as violate the moral judgment which is inherent in universal humanity, and which it is the purpose of the Gospel to develop in man, then we are to reject such presentations. What if one cry, "These be thy gods, O Israel—bow down and worship!" Israel is bound to worship only the true God. The true God must report the evidence of his being and nature to man's moral sense. No man has a right to worship a demon because priest or prophet call the cruel thing God. It is a shame for any one to say to supreme selfishness, "Thy will be done." Only goodness has a right to be worshiped. Shall we call darkness, light? evil, good? harsh dissonance, music? Shall a man lie to his eye and bear false witness of his ear?

Behind this hideous vision, this horrid and wicked picture which men have made, there is a nature of God which answers to my moral inspirations—which answers to that which is best in me, and best in my whole kind; and that One I will find out. My heart cries out for God—but not for a heathen deity, cruel, selfish and hard. If there be any where, in creed, philosophy or poetry, a revelation of Love triumphing over evil, of Power without despotism, of a Father who chastens whom he loves; who inflicts pain for the sufferer's good; who stoops from the height of heaven to suffer for his creatures, rather than to inflict suffering upon them, let such a one be manifested and I will cry with heart and soul, "Thy will be done!' And when that which is admirable is seen, and that which is universally beneficent is known, to that One I will say "*Father*"; to that One I will say, "Thy kingdom come!"

It is therefore a prime duty in all teachers to clear away the misconceptions and hideous fables which may have grown up around human conception of the divine character, and to bring forth those attributes which will draw men toward God, not only, but which will lead them to take hold of Him by their highest and best nature, and not by their lowest and worst—that is, by love and admiration, and not by fear and selfishness.

I. Moral qualities are the same in God that they are in man; otherwise there can be no sympathy, no understanding, and in fact there

can be no intelligible God for men. They, therefore, who tell us that we are so unlike to God, that the transfer in our thoughts of our knowledge and experience to the divine nature is a falsification of that divine nature; that we are so utterly different from God in quality and kind that there is no significance in our experience, no interpretation, no analogy between him and us, do practically take from us the power of forming any conception of God.

What idea do we get of color that is represented by blue, but which blue does not at all resemble? What if a man say to us, "If you wish to know how your mother looked, who died when you were too young to remember her, look at that picture, which comes nearest to a resemblance and yet does not look like her at all"! Why, without resemblance what possible means can there be of getting at the obscure and unknown? How are we to know divine being if it is so radically different from anything that we know that there is no analogy that can interpret it? Honor, justice, truth, love, purity, hope, fidelity—these are in essential nature alike in God and in men, and we can reason from our knowledge to the existence, the attributes, and the administration of the Divine Being. It is very true that human and divine experience are not identical—that they are not precise measures one of the other. I do not undertake to say that love exists in so feeble or in so adulterated a form in the divine nature as it does in human experience; that these qualities, when they are divested of those physical conditions which are fitted to be cradles, but which will pass away when the child grows to manhood, will be comparable to the same qualities in the divine nature. In God they are inconceivably more beautiful and glorious than they are in men. I merely mean that the root-quality which we apprehend is the same; and that there is an understanding existing in that which we are and which we feel, which is the basis of a correct interpretation of the divine nature. The scope, the grandeur, the overflow, the beauty of the divine character will put all our conceptions at defiance. The fruitfulness of the divine nature cannot be compassed by our thought. We are feeble compared with the agencies of God in natural law; feeble in understanding, compared with the vitalizing influences of the divine nature; feeble and fruitless, comparatively, in the noble qualities that go to make up manhood. God will transcend in grandeur and fruitfulness any model or magnification of models. The imagination cannot augment quality so as to represent God. Nevertheless, the quality in us and in him is the same in kind, though not in greatness.

A little child has never gone out of its native village. Its father

has been a sailor. The child says to him, "Father, what is the ocean?" "Oh, my child," says the father, "the ocean—why, suppose that little brook there were to widen, and widen, and widen, till it reached away beyond that hill; and then suppose it were to widen, and widen, and widen, till it reached away beyond the mountain; and then suppose it were to reach farther and farther till you could not see the banks of it, that would be the ocean." "What, father! as big as that?" "Oh, my child, it is a thousand times bigger than that." "Well, father, what is a storm on the ocean?" The father takes a pail of water, and sets it down, and oscillates it until the waves roll from side to side, and then he says, "That is it, on a small scale, my child. It gives only a hint of what a storm on the ocean is." The child will have a very limited conception, I take it, of such a storm from what he sees in the pail. But every drop of that water in the pail is like the water of the ocean; and every one of its waves, in its curves, its motions, its laws, represents the most gigantic waves of the sea.

Thus the lowest experiences in human nature, of love, of pity, of fidelity, and of truth, small in us, are of the same essential quality as they are in God. They are vaster in God, they are in him inconceivable in magnitude, in intensity, in fruitfulness and in beauty, but we have the root-notion; and it is not an unfair interpretation which our imagination gives.

Moral likeness of qualities in God and men is indispensable to man's communion with Him.

We cannot send up our affections to God unless there is in the divine nature something that corresponds to our affections. Any other view than this seems to me to lead to an abyss of ignorance, or else to the wastes of atheism. The best experiences of mankind are fairly analogues of the nature of God. "Blessed," therefore, "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

II. Man is commanded to indue himself with the moral qualities which are revealed in God. When it is said "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" we are exhorted to practice the virtues which exist in God. God is our exemplar. His attributes, so far as imitable, are our proper models. If then pride, self-will, self-seeking, the use of all creation as a means of self-gratification, are right in God, they are models for our imitation. Nothing can be more destructive to the moral sense of mankind, than to regard these qualities which are detestable among men, as right and noble, because exercised by a being of larger nature and in a position of irresponsible power. If it is wrong for a man to make his own fame the supreme object of life,

it cannot but be yet more wrong at each step upward on the scale of being. If any creatures are to be indulged with license it is the weak and feeble. Obligations of honor, justice, truth, magnanimity meekness, disinterestedness, increase as we rise in the scale of being and are supreme in God. To say that God has a right to be selfish because he is Sovereign and can do as he pleases, is to corrupt our fundamental notions of morality. It is a lesson borrowed from the most abject form of absolute monarchy. Those moral dispositions inculcated by the Sermon on the Mount, and the sublime example of the self-sacrificing nature of divine love, in Jesus Christ, have educated the moral sense in Christendom. And that Christianity which formed moral sense in us must be the criterion by which to accept or reject the attributes of God, which, from time to time, theologians present. And this same Christian moral sense must guide us in all our interpretations of the meaning of the inspired Scriptures, when there seem to be discordant or conflicting represen tations of the Divine character. If Christ was meek and lowly of heart; if he taught men that self-sacrifice was nobler than self-indulgence; if he by word, and yet more illustriously by deed, declared that moral nobility stood rather in suffering for others, than in inflicting suffering upon them; if the examples and precepts of Jesus teach leniency rather than severity, forgiveness rather than condemnation, mercy rather than sacrifice, love rather than wrath then, in building up in our minds a conception of God, we must not be deluded by monarchical maxims, nor barbaric ethics, nor by figures of speech, or poetic and dramatic imagery. We must give supremacy to the attributes which Christ taught and exemplified, and construe all other representations into harmony with them.

If the Gospel be not a deluding fable, then we know among moral qualities which are good and which evil. Selfishness, arrogance, self-will, pride, wrath, injustice, are not turned into virtues by placing them in the sphere of the infinite and giving sovereignty to them.

That law which binds you and me—the law of the cradle; the law of the household; the law of love; the law of philanthropy; the law of universal sympathy—is nowhere so mighty as in the supreme Heart-governor of the universe, who does what he pleases because he always pleases to do good. I will admit that in one sense, looking at it in one way, God can take no counsel with any man. He judges of what is benevolent as no other being does, because no other being can equal his thought of beneficence. He does his will merely because he stands above all other intelligences in the perception of that which is for universal happiness. The law of

God can recive no augmentation. Who are there in the universe that have not derived their judgment and knowledge from him? And by that law, that moral constitution, which he put in men, and which generation after generation augments and makes stronger and stronger, I judge him to be one who does not believe that might makes right, but believes that goodness makes right. And he does what he pleases because he pleases to do that which is infinitely good, and fruitful in infinite joy.

There be those who teach us that God acts supremely for his own glory. That you can put a construction upon this which will disabuse it of its first and apparent meaning, I know. It may be that God's glory consists in the welfare of his creatures, and that therefore he reigns for his own glory. With such an interpretation as that the sentiment has the heartiest approval of every soul which is susceptible of moral convictions and intuitions. But that has not always been the interpretation given to it.

All that in me which is the "fruit of the Spirit" rebels against a transfer to God, of qualities which I have been trained to hate in men! I will not worship a malign Deity. I will not pray, "Thy Kingdom come" to a Being who is represented as doing things which the worst tyrant that ever lived to torment men could not have surpassed. Such a Being is not God. It is a hideous fiction—an ideal idol, which every sane and good man should help to cast down. Hear Theology saying; "*By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels, are predestinated unto everlasting life, and* OTHERS FOREORDAINED TO EVERLASTING DEATH." Is God, then, One who in calm council with himself, determined to create multitudes of men on purpose that they might sin, and that they might suffer for sinning, and that forever? Did he organize men to produce sin just as the loom is built to produce textile fabrics, just as the engine is built to develop and utilize power? Did he build them that they should answer the ends of creation by suffering forever and ever?

Look at Chapter Third, from the Confession of Faith of the Saybrook Platform, adopted by the Congregational churches and ministers of Connecticut, 1708 [cited below, entire]*. It is with a few

*1. "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy council of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet, so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."

2. "Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed anything, because he foresaw it as future, or that which would come to pass upon such conditions."

3. "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and

variations identical with what is called the Savoy Confession, or one agreed upon at a conference of bishops and dissenting ministers, held at the Savoy, London, 1661. The Savoy is almost identical with the *Westminster Confession*, formed in 1643 and ratified by Parliament 1690. It was approved and made part of the Cambridge Platform by the Congregational ministers and churches of New England, 1648,—a few years only after its promulgation. The Westminister Confession is also the Confession of the Presbyterian Church of the United States and is subscribed, entirely, or "for substance of doctrine" by every licentiate of the church.

I am not finding fault with the Doctrine of Decrees, but only with the one special decree, namely, the foreordination of men to eternal damnation. I am not arguing the question of the reality and justice of eternal future punishment as that dogma is held by orthodox churches. For evangelical churches, at least in our day, declare that men have sinned willfully, needlessly, against light and dissuasion; that God neither openly nor secretly desired it, or desires their punishment; that even after the transgression he earnestly interposed recuperative influences, sincerely offered, and within the reach and compliance of every man to whom the gospel comes. Now the

angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death."

4. "These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained [that is, those who will go to eternal happiness, and those who are to go to eternal misery] are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

5. "Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace."

6. "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he by the eternal and most free purpose of his will foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power, through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."

7. "The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own self, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

This view of the Divine efficiency in the production of sin, first rendered prominent by Augustine, has been, at various periods, the subject of long and bitter controversy—one part holding that God created man to damnation, not through the foresight of his desert by reason of sin, but for other reasons, hidden in God's own nature; the other contending that though men were decreed to everlasting damnation, it was because God foresaw the evil that they would commit, and for which, as subjects of moral government, they would deserve the penalties incurred. In its most rigorous sense this chapter is still held by what are styled High Calvinists. But is believed that the vast majority of orthodox Congregationalist and Presbyterian ministers would, at this day, be unwilling to say that the view of God,

representation of God in the chapter upon Decrees is totally irreconcilable with such views. It represents God as having for some secret purpose, in which his interest was to be promoted, predestinated some men to an eternity of joy, and other men to an eternity of wretchedness, and that the decree had in it the imperativeness of absolute fate; it executed itself with such irresistibleness that the number of either kind cannot be increased or diminished.

We do not doubt that pain is a moral element and that penalty is consistent with Divine love. But, the creation of suffering for its own sake; or the ordination of men to suffering without regard to its benevolent effects; and, still more, an idea of *justice* which punishes men for acting according to the creative will of their Maker, and of a *glory* which would be illustrated by ordaining men to an eternity of torment without foresight of good or evil in them, can proceed from nothing less than a demonic nature. If one's imagination can sustain him while he flies along the equatorial line of despair following the endless circle of but one single soul, that had been " made to be a vessel of wrath, had been ordained to sin, and then had been passed by, and ordained to dishonor and wrath " to the praise of his glorious justice!" he would cry out in an ecstacy of righteous indignation against such monstrous and immoral notions of Deity! To worship such a Creator would be impiety. To hold up such a view to love, and reverence, is to insult the moral sense which has been rooted in the gospel. Such a God is not only not manifested in Christ Jesus, but sits over against the exquisite beauty of his revelation of God, as Hell itself sits over against Heaven. If such views were believed, and widely spread, it would authorize and justify every species of despotism in human government, and make the spread of Christian ideas of justice and self-sacrifice impossible!

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naturally and obviously inferred from this chapter, is the view which Christ came into the world to declare and manifest! So late as 1865, the Council of the Congregational Churches of America, meeting at Boston, Mass., placed the ministers and churches in the position of seeming to approve this chapteer, although, without doubt, very few of them held it in the sense in which it was held by the early fathers of New England in 1648 and 1680. The language of the Boston Council was:

" We, the elders and messengers of the Congregational churches of the United States in National Council assembled * * * do now declare our adherence to the faith and order of the apostolic and primitive churches held by our fathers, *and substantially as embodied in the confessions and platforms which our Synods of* 1648 *and* 1680 *set forth or reaffirmed.* We declare that the experience of the nearly two and a half centuries * * * has only *deepened our confidence in the faith and polity of those Fathers. We bless God for the inheritance of these doctrines.*"

The New England divines of 1648 and 1680 held to the doctrines contained in the chapter on Decrees in a far more vigorous and more nearly literal sense than have the modern New England divines. The Unitarian controversy produced a marked change. The writings of Woods, Dr. Lyman Beecher, Prof. Fitch, and Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, have well nigh revolutionized the New England views. And it is at least unfortunate that the Council of Boston should have inadvertently gone back to 1648, unmindful of the great progress made since that time.

The representation of God made in the Chapter on Decrees, in the Westminster Confession, is not less blasphemous because honestly framed. If held as High Calvinists hold it, it is an attack upon the sanctity of God, and upon the moral sense of mankind. If it be softened by explanations, and illustrated by other parts of the Confession, as is done by Low Calvinism, it still can never be brought into agreement with that idea of God which Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal. Consider what a crime against universal justice and universal benevolence, it would be for God to connive at the eternal loss of a single soul, if he by any means could have prevented it! But what shall be said if he planned that ruin; if he called it justice; if he proclaimed the feat as glorious? Have you ever deeply pondered what it is to be lost? To be shut out from all joy, from the society of all that are good, to be herded with the offscouring of the universe, to increase in the capacity of suffering, through ages that travel forever and never draw near to the end of their journey?

Consider only one being, one single soul, carried on forever, growing huger and huger, bloated with anguish, pressing forward, swelling the latitude and longitude of wails that for ten thousand years had shaken with horror the expanse, and which yet were so much less than the later wails that they seemed like music in comparison! Consider the rolling of the vast orb of damnation with a single soul down through countless infinities of years! The conception of one soul being lost fills every sentient heart with paralysis of despair—with unutterable anguish. Do not tell me that God created one soul on purpose to damn it; that he sat and thought of it, and said, "I will do it," and started it on its hideous way of wailing and sinning and sorrowing, and wailing and sinning and sorrowing, and wailing and sinning and sorrowing, forever and forever—do not tell me this, and then ask me to turn around and say, "Our Father."

Could there be a heaven, if it was known there, that beneath their feet one single creature was traveling an eternal road of woe for which he had been expressly created? Praise would be dumb; chill distrust would creep upon confidence.

What then, if not simply one single solitary being were moving in an eternal pilgrimage of woe, along the infernal marl, but for ages there had been moving thither a huge caravan—a myriad of victims! What could be thought of a sovereign who organized pain not as a sanction of government, but who created beings for infinite pain, in order to bring out some quality in himself called, by what strange transmutation of words I know not, Justice and Glory! If the astounding views of God prevail that are contained in this

immortally infamous chapter, and which deeply color the preaching of even those that would give them the mildest significance, then we must believe that a world is continued in existence to pour an incessant flood of souls into that eternal anguish for which they were expressly foreordained. The work is going on in every generation. It will go on. It is known. It was foreseen. It was planned and ordained The army of the black banner must already be incalculable. It is still mustering. Under the broad canopy of blackness and darkness still troop onward these creatures whom God created expressly that he might manifest his glory in their damnation ! They fill the air. They crowd the eternal road. They are swept on to the sound of that trumpet whose blasts are full of thunder and woe. The army never shrinks. The world is still going on in population ; as they sink at one end of the line, others are born to begin the inevitable march to endless doom. God looks on. He does not stop it. It is all for " the praise of his glorious justice"! The world is busy, populating—populating its tides of men broader, its channels deeper. As Niagara has rolled on for ages, bearing over the precipice myriads beyond count of drops of water, that plunged whirling headlong into the boiling abyss below, so we must think that the endless stream of human life has been plunging the solid breadth of its waters over into the abyss of blackness and darkness forever. They move to channels prepared for them. They come into life by an ordinance. They are met here by a decree irresistible as Fate. They reach the mark at which God aimed them !

Is not this frightful ? Is it not a hideous dream—a nightmare ? Do men ever believe it and maintain their reason ? Is it possible that we can worship at this shrine, if we love Goodness ? Is this the government of a Father ?

It may be said, that the Divine Sovereign is not Father in any such low degree as man is, and that it is not safe to reason from an earthly Fatherhood to the Infinite Father. True. But in which direction shall we trace the difference ? Is God less tender than a man—less merciful ? Even before the clearer revelation in Jesus, it was said, " Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thought, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon him. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Is. 55 : 7, 8.)

And Jesus, encouraging men to love and trust in God, pointed to the relation of children and parents, and said, " If ye then, being

evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more* shall your father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ?" God's Fatherhood rises to an inconceivable majesty of goodness. It is spotted by no ignorance, it is creased by no weakness, is distorted by no selfishness, is clouded by no insincerity. It is full of that tenderness out of which mothers learn to love their babes. It is the source of that noble joy with which every father looks forward to the well-being of his sons. *He* taught the parent to be patient with weakness, to hide a child's sins till brooding love could cure them.

Fatherhood is the central light of the Household of the Empyrean, and from it came that spark which glows in every household of love on earth, teaching men that he is greatest who suffers most for the sake of others. And, lest the faint analogies should be too dim for our eyes, He sent forth his Son, to save a world from sin and doom, while yet it was his enemy. As he was coming to earth, angels cried, "*Good-will to men!*" As he was departing from life, he sent back the cry, "*Father forgive them!*" His life between these points is written in a sentence, "*He went about doing good.*"

To Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the GLORY of God the Father! God's glory effulges in the many virtues which he has made obligatory upon men—gentleness, meekness, benevolence, sympathy, self-denial, giving forth to others, rather than coveting all good for ourselves.

Tell me that God fills the heaven, and governs the earth, that Providence is benevolent, and that the divine government, when we shall see the full accomplishment of its final intents, shall bring forth this proved and approved fatherhood; tell me that God sits in the heaven, not so much to think of himself as to pour thoughts that are benefactions, and affections that are inspirations, upon all the endlessly increasing universe, and then nothing can restrain me. I turn to such a conception of God and join that universal cry which shall acclaim Jesus, Victor, when heaven and earth shall say, "THOU ART WORTHY!"

Spurn these hideous dreams of superstition and darkness—these web-weavings of philosophy run mad! Take the sweetness of the mother, her tears over her cradle, her night watchings, her quick and easy withdrawals from everything delightful and pleasant for the sake of ministering to those who are dear to her—is not this a holier image from which to imagine the divine character, than the monarchical and metaphorical picture?

I often behold with great pleasure the maiden growing up fair

and fascinating. Wherever she goes, she is admired. She receives praise on every side. She enjoys it. It has a charm for her. It is new. She is pure, and imaginative, and artless; and she gives herself to this round of royal joy; and all the wise people who know her shake their heads, and say, "She is frivolous—she will never come to wisdom." But she is not grown yet. Nobody is grown who has not loved. The hour comes, however, when love subdues all things, and she is led to the altar. She becomes a wife. She walks in a subdued vein already. But not until she is queen over that which is utterly helpless and dependent, do you see her whole nature bud and blossom. How she draws back from gaiety and hilarity! How she gives up the song and the dance! How, through weary hours, and without a murmur, does she watch the cradle! How she cares not, as she looks in the mirror, that the roses are fading from her cheeks! Alas! alas! the little child is a cripple, and all its life it must go hobbling with but one limb sound, the marked of all eyes! And how does the mother give herself to that child to make up to it its infirmity! How glad she is to sing to it or read to it! How soon all the world becomes but a magazine to her of things that she can draw from to bless her dear little one! How for five or ten years does she sacrifice her own comfort and enjoyment that she may minister to its wants!

Who taught her this requisite self-sacrifice of love? Is it a weed sprung up from human depravity? or is it the seed of a divine flower dropped down into her heart from heaven? And if a mother uses the forces of her whole life and household, shall not the God, whose nature inspired hers, employ the Universe for the well-being of his creatures? Is she better than God? Is a mother's love super-divine? Nay, is not God the Sun, and every human heart but a taper? Is not Christ's death an everlasting testimony to the earnestness of God to exalt mankind? Does not God rejoice over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance? A lost soul could have no such mourner in the Universe as God! What noble protestations, what solemn warnings against man's self-destruction! What sacrifice, what divine suffering, what energy of earnestness in behalf of men!

Oh, Love, thou art medicine! Oh, Love, thou art God! From Thee comes the everlasting summer of the soul! From such a God in such a summer could never come those deadly parasites that have wrapped around the tree of life, or dropped down poisonous blossoms for man's death, rather than love for the healing of the nations!

I worship such a God as is revealed in Christ!

I need such a One; fate will not help me. I need such a One; for I am deformed, I am selfish, I am proud, I am wayward. The forces that are in men drive this engine in me with terrible alacrity, and I have striven to overcome it; but day and night it masters me; and day and night, to the innermost secrets of my soul, my consciousness says, "Unclean! unclean! Dear Love, be merciful!" I need a God who shall bear with me, and be patient with me; and such is my God! My God carries in his heart atonement.

Men ask me, "Why do you not preach atonement?" Have I not preached about God's love? What atonement is there greater than the nature of God? Atonement is God. Do you suppose God shoved out of himself a little historic drama which was mightier and better than he? What was that but a symbol to interpret what He is everlastingly in himself? The heart of God it is that overcomes. This is that grace by which we are saved. This is that mercy which abounds without depth and without exhaustion.

God the Lover; God the All-good; God that will not by any means clear the guilty; God that would save them every one; God that will use pain and joy alike in dealing with those whom he loves, to make them his children—this is the God whom I worship, and against whom you sin. This is the God toward whom I call you to repent. Repent of an unfilial life. Repent of selfishness over against such bounty. Repent of all that is low and base and disobedient as against the Father who waits for you in the heavenly land. I call you to the service of this God, magnificent in glory, transcendent in beauty, but most of all glorious because long-suffering, abundant in mercy, "forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." To this God I call you. In him trust. Live by him here. Die in the faith of him. Rise toward him. Rejoice with him forever and forever.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, O our Father, that we have this approach to thee by desire; that our wants suggest thee; that our affections are evermore drawn up toward thee; that by gratitude we discern thee through our blessings, and that by faith we are taught to discern thee through our sorrows and troubles. We rejoice that thou hast called thyself by such names; that all that which is best to us on earth is now associated with thee; that we are helped to draw near to thee by all our earthly relations; and that we interpret thee no longer by our fear, but by hope, by love, by wisdom, and by experience. And yet, thou art greater than anything that we can conceive of goodness. In all thine attributes thou art more wonderful. In all thy procedure thou art more glorious. When we shall see thee as thou art,

and know the secret of thy universal realm, we shall behold thee in colors and in a grandeur that shall put to shame the brightest and best things that we have seen out of thee upon earth. We beseech of thee, therefore, that thou wilt grant that we may have that purity of heart, that warmth of love, that blessedness of self-denial, that spirit of laboring one for another, by which we shall best see God. May we grow in grace, that we may grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that we may not be left to the suggestions of our fancy. May our thoughts be inspired by thy heart—by thy Spirit. May we have the Holy Ghost giving light to us—waking in us thoughts that are of thee. We pray that there may be abiding in us this witness of God, so that we may be children of God. As day by day we are surrounded by thee, may we be affected even as children are unconsciously affected by the surrounding influences of the parents with whom they dwell. May we cease to think of this world as something separated from thy government. May we look upon all the globe as being thine. And though it be but thy footstool—but a part of thine house and home—may we look upon all the things which are in it as ministers of God sent to minister to those who are heirs of salvation. May we rejoice in all the way of thy providence. May we rejoice in all the lessons which are derived thence in respect to thy grace. If the outer court and tabernacle is so full of thy glory, what shall be the holy of holies? How blessed shall be the heavenly estate, if thou canst lavish such abundance upon the earthly estate! If now, shattered or unbuilt, the earth and the heaven speak the glory of God, what shall it be when thou shalt have made the new heaven and the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness?

We bring to thee, this morning, the only offerings which we can bring—beautiful thoughts; thoughts of praise; the surrender of love. Help us to desire, this morning, the best things for ourselves, that our Father may be pleased with his children. Draw us nearer to thee by the abundance of thy love, so that we may find ourselves beginning to love. And yet, what can we give to thee? Of all the things that are made bright by the sun, what thing can glorify the sun? May we, standing in the light of thy glory, reflect that light and that glory, and so be thy witnesses, though we can add nothing to thee.

We beseech of thee to draw near to those who are following after thee; who desire to know more, to feel more of thee. Help them to subdue every evil thought, every unruly passion. Help them to bring into subjection everything in them, that they may be the children of the living God, unabashed and unashamed.

We pray that thou wilt help those who are consciously striving with the imperfections of their nature—trying to adjust and to hold to equilibrium their warring inclinations. We pray that the Spirit may fight against the flesh, and overcome it, and that they may have evidence day by day that they are rising, though slowly, yet surely, into their better self—into their higher life—into communion with God.

As the things of the world are passing, and as our experience of them is not making them more precious to us, grant that it may be more and more easy for us to give them up, and to have our strength in our hope and in our eternal treasure.

We pray that thou wilt bless those who mourn. Remember those who are filled with sorrow for their sinfulness. We pray that thou wilt grant that none may despair. May those who have done wrong do so no more Turn them back from every evil way, and confirm them in the ways of reformation and of a holy repentance not to be repented of. Grant that they may be brought into fellowship with thee, and into that communion wherein is perfect peace. We beseech of thee that thou wilt bless and sanctify to

all the sorrows with which thou hast visited them in thy providence. May those who are suffering bereavement feel that their affliction has not sprung from the ground; that it is not of the dust, but of God. May they be able to feel that God hath done all things well. And though he reveal not the secret of his purpose, may they believe that yet it shall be made plain when all things shall be disclosed.

We pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt grant to those who are under great troubles and trials, those who have great fears and anxieties, that they may know how to put their trust in God, and rest in his promise, and gather much fruit of consolation therefrom.

We pray for all the strangers that are in our midst who have backward thoughts searching out the friends whom they have left far away. Sanctify their home-sickness and heart-sickness. Bring them into nearer communion with thee, and through their faith in thee nearer to those who are absent from them.

We pray for all the sick and all that are in affliction. And wilt thou be in the house of mourning. Wilt thou be in the midst of afflictions, directing them and sanctifying them. Prepare us all for losses. Prepare us for all the calamities that may come upon us in life. Prepare us for old age, and for its infirmities. Prepare us for poverty. Prepare us, if it be thy will, for all those things which shall make the earth poor indeed to us. Prepare us for dying, for its joys and its triumphs. May we so live that we shall look for the coming of the Son of Man, as watchers look for the morning. And when we shall depart, may it be to be with Christ. May we behold his glory in the kingdom of his Father. May we then discern the things that are invisible, and be able to speak the things that are now unutterable. May we rise from glory to glory to be forever with the Lord.

We pray that thy blessing may go forth this day in all directions unto the churches of every name, that thy ministering servants may be able to preach in sincerity, in truth, and with power from on high. We pray that thou wilt take away from among thy people all causes of division. May they see eye to eye. May they live heart in sympathy with heart. And we pray that thou wilt more and more overcome the powers of evil, and strengthen the powers of good throughout the world. Fulfill all thy promises toward the nations of the earth. Enlighten the dark places, and raise up the places that are lying low in superstition and ignorance. We pray that thou wilt expel all unjust government, and destroy all rule that has affliction for its end. And let that latter-day of glory come when all the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and when there shall be brightness and joy everywhere.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises evermore. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our heavenly Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt follow with thy blessing the word of exhortation and the word of truth. Cleanse our hearts, that we may behold thee more clearly. Make us more fit ministers of the word, by making us better in manhood and better in true piety. Overcome our many sins. Cleanse us from all uncleanness. Deliver us from the power of temptation. Purify our tastes. Give charity to our reason. Lead us by thyself to thyself. And so, when we shall have passed through the school, and shall have graduated, may we go home to thee to be sons of God unrebukedly, without flaw, in the presence of all the holy angels. And to thy name shall be the glory forever and forever. *Amen.*

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